

Animals & Men

The Journal of The Centre for Fortean Zoology

ISSUE THREE

£1.50



This issue of *Animals & Men* was put together by the following band of Cryptozoological malcontents:

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Special thanks this issue to:

Bernard Heuvelmans, Janet Bord, Craig Harris, Dr Karl P.N. Shuker. Congratulations to Richard and Sian.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

'Animals and Men' appears four times a year in October, January, April and July. A four issue subscription costs:

£ 6.00 UK/Eire
£ 7.00 EEC
£7.50 Europe non EEC
£9.00 OZ NZ USA Canada (Surface Mail)
£12.00 OZ NZ USA Canada (Air Mail)
£10.00 Rest of World (surface mail)
£12.00 Rest of World (air Mail)

Cheques in Sterling or IMO or Eurocheque payable to A&J Downes.

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The picture on the front cover was taken by Terry Connolly and is reprinted with the kind permission of The Eastbourne Gazette.

Animals and Men is compiled and typeset by Jonathan Downes on an Amiga A500 using Penpal 3.1 and Pagesetter 2 Software, decaffienated coffee, and a small kitten called Pixel.
Thou art God.

THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE

Dear Friends,

Probably the best thing about running a magazine such as this is the great variety of people with whom you deal. One of the most interesting people that I have come into contact with in the past three months is Ray Nelke. Ray is a man with a mission. Some people collect stamps, some people collect records, some people collect butterflies, in my time I have collected all three. Ray Nelke has a collection too..but Ray collects unusual data. He has an exhaustive collection of unusual information on a bewildering range of subjects which span the widest ranges of Fortean interest and many other fields besides.

The really unusual thing about Ray is the fact that he is prepared to share his collection with anyone who is interested, and he is prepared to do it for nothing! We contacted Ray on the off chance, without really knowing anything about him, and he sent us (by return of post), an enormous bundle of photocopies on an unbelievably wide range of subjects. The material ranged from scholarly though esoteric knowledge to complete nonsense, and after a couple of hours leafing through the material he sent and listening to his sampler tape I was hooked.

We will continue to work with Ray's organisation COUD-I and we shall send him any material of interest to him whether or not it is within our particular sphere of interest. Could you please send us any clippings of a broadly Fortean nature, or better still contact Ray direct at: COUD-I, 2312 Shields Avenue, St Louis, MO 63136 USA

If you do contact him direct please tell him that we sent you. We hope that you like issue three. It has more pages, more illustrations and more information than ever before. We have over twice as many regional representatives and double the number of subscribers that we had three months ago, and we are determined to get even bigger and better. Thank you for all your help and goodwill,

Best wishes,
Jonathan Downes, (Editor)

NEWSFILE

Compiled and Edited by *Jan Williams* with the aid of her intrepid band of Newsfile Correspondents and the odd (sometimes VERY odd) interjection from The Editor.

'ONE TWO THREE WHAT ARE WE SEARCHING FOR?

As more news comes from Vietnam, cryptozoology begins to feel like waiting for a bus - nothing turns up for ages, then 6 new large mammal species are discovered within a couple of years. Vietnamese biologist Nguyen Ngoc Chinh found the skull of an animal known to local hunters as the *Quang khem*, in the Pu Mat jungle 50 miles north of Vu Quang. The *Quang khem*, or slow-running deer, has two short antlers resembling the horns on a Viking helmet. Dr John Mackinnon has collected other skulls of the species - including some from boxes of unsorted bones at Hanoi's Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources.

Mackinnon also has antlers from two further species. The first is known to locals as the 'Mangden' or black deer, and the second as *Linh duong* or holy goat.

(Time 3.7.94; Independent on Sunday 3.7.94; Wild About Animals Sept '94)

NEW 'ROO IN IRIAN JAYA

Several years ago Tim Flannery of the Australian Museum in Sydney received a photograph of a hunter holding a baby tree kangaroo. Flannery, an expert on the fauna of Melanesia, was puzzled by the animal, which didn't seem to be a standard tree kangaroo. In May of this year he led an expedition to the remote Mauke mountain range in central Irian Jaya, the Indonesian province on the island of New Guinea, and found a primitive black and white tree kangaroo, known to the Moni tribe as 'bondegezou' or 'man of the forest'. The kangaroo has very long black fur over most of the back and head, a white front, two white blazes across the black muzzle and a white star in the middle of the forehead. Adult males can measure 4 feet from nose to tail tip, and weigh up to 33 lbs. The tail, about 20 inches long, is the shortest of any kangaroo, relative to body size. The creature is very primitive in its body type and behaviour, according to Flannery. Although it appears to be adapted for life in the trees, it spends most of its time on the ground, and descends from trees tail first, unlike other tree kangaroo species. The 'bondegezou' is regarded as sacred by the Moni people. It seems unafraid of humans, and greets them by standing on its hind legs and whistling.

News of this discovery must bring renewed hope to Ned Terry, who believes Thylacines may still exist in the high country wilderness of Irian Jaya. Terry showed photographs of Thylacines to local hunters who named the animal as 'Dobsegna' and described its behaviour, paw prints and eating habits. They fear the animal and associate it with evil spirits. Fossil evidence suggests that Thylacines were once common on New Guinea, and the island to search for positive evidence. Could Irian Jaya be another Vu Quang?

(Minneapolis Star & Tribune 26.7.94; Westfalenpost 22.7.94;

BORNEAN BAY CAT REDISCOVERED

The last confirmed sighting of the Bay Cat, or Bornean Red Cat, (*Profelis badia*) was in 1928. The species was known from only 6 incomplete specimens, of which five were collected prior to 1900. Nothing is known of the Bay Cat's biology, and little about its behaviour, and for 65 years there were only occasional unconfirmed sightings to suggest that the species continued to survive.

In November 1992 an adult female Bay Cat was captured by trappers on the Sarawak-Indonesian border, and kept in captivity for several months. It was eventually taken to the Sarawak Museum but was dying when it arrived.

This specimen bears a striking resemblance to a miniature Temminck's Cat (*Profelis temminckii*). It is hoped that genetic analysis of blood and tissue samples will help to clarify confusion as to the Bay Cat's taxonomic status.

(*Oryx*, vol 28, no 1, January 1994)

WILL THE REAL SCOTTISH WILDCAT PLEASE STAND UP?

A study by Scottish Natural Heritage, now at draft report stage, has reached the surprising conclusion that it is impossible to differentiate between Scottish Wildcats (*Felis silvestris grampia*) and domestic cats on the basis of markings, skull size or even genetic testing. The research was carried out at the request of the Scottish Office, following a court case in 1990 in which a gamekeeper was accused of killing three Scottish Wildcats, protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. The case had to be dropped because no expert witness could verify that the animals were in fact Wildcats.

The Scottish Wildcat was defined in 1907 by the British Museum; the chosen type specimen being an animal killed at Drumnadrachit in 1904. From this point the species 'evolved' by unnatural selection - gamekeepers supplying Wildcats to museums and zoos were paid only for the ones which conformed to the type specimen. The SNH research found that the marking theories of the Natural History Museum did not stand up to rigorous examination: a tabby, striped coat, and bushy tail with six distinct bands are just as likely to be found on a domestic tabby, or a feral cat.

Genetic testing established distinct groups of larger cats in various parts of the Highlands. While most of the animals in these groups resemble the traditional wildcat, some have widely variable markings, including large patches of white or black. David Balharry of SNH states 'There is a type of cat that the environment is selecting in some areas . . . Whether that population is a remnant of the original Scottish Wildcat, I don't know.' The team have applied for funding for further research, including comparing the DNA from bones of ancient cats from the Inchnadamph Caves with that of modern cats. Research to date leaves the true Scottish Wildcat (if it still exists) with no legal protection, and a lot of museums displaying animals which may well be feral domestic cats.

(*The Scotsman* 15/8/94)

JUST TAKING THE ALLIGATOR FOR A SWIM ...

Joerg Zars became the least popular resident of Neuss, near Cologne, Germany on 11th July when he took his pet alligator Sammy for a swim in the lake. Four-foot long Sammy slipped his lead and swam away. Two thousand tourists were evacuated from the leisure park lake as police marksman equipped with searchlights and sonar scanners hunted for the alligator. Sammy was eventually captured alive five days later by a reptile expert, and transferred to Cologne Zoo, whilst Zars faced a #65,000 bill for the search and the park's lost takings.

On 18th July, as Sammy pondered on what might have been, Minnesota Public Radio broadcast a report of an alligator on the loose east of Bemidji, MN. A DNR spokesman confirmed that numerous reports of the creature had been received from a swampy area with many lakes, but they had little hope of catching it.

(Daily Mail 13.7.94, 14.7.94, 16.7.94, MPR 18.7.94)

LOST . . .

Fifty snakes, many belonging to rare species, were stolen from The Serpentarium at Walsall, West Midlands on 18th July. They were part of a world-famous collection built up by reptile expert Dave Leicester, who died in May.

(Daily Mail 19.7.94)

Lecter, a three foot long monitor lizard, escaped from owner Mansoor Masood's home in Violet Bank Road, Sheffield in July. Masood described his pet (named after Hannibal the Cannibal) as a cross between a pit bull terrier and a cat, and warned that it could eat a small dog and might even savage a child.

(Daily Mail 29.7.94)

. . . AND FOUND

Customs officers raided a terraced house at Canton, Cardiff, and seized 100 exotic reptiles, including a poison arrow frog, royal python, rainbow boa constrictor and a cayman.

(Daily Mail 4.8.94)

A two-headed grass snake was found in a dung heap in Winchelsea by Les Paine, who named the creature 'Four Eyes' and gave it to a mini-zoo in Seaford. There will be more details and hopefully a photograph in the next issue.

(Daily Mail 17.9.94)

CREepy CRAWLIES...

A three and a half inch long black red and cream caterpillar found by nine year old Gemma Thorpe in her grandfather's garden at St Leonard's, East Sussex, was identified by Colin Pratt of Hastings Museum as a Spurge Hawk Moth, last seen in England in 1949.

(Daily Mail 31.8.94)

SACRED BUFFALO

A white buffalo calf born at Janesville, Wisconsin, has been hailed by American Indians as a sacred beast, harbinger of astonishing and historic events for all Native Americans. Legend states that the white buffalo will unify the nations of the four colours, the black, red, yellow and white. Representatives of Indian tribes visited David Heider's farm to hold ceremonies, and leave offerings to ensure the health and safety of the calf, named Miracle. The cow calf has brown eyes, showing that she is not a true albino, and may become just another brown buffalo when she sheds her coat in the spring.

(Daily Telegraph 3.9.94, Daily Mail 3.9.94)

ARCTIC FOX

An animal resembling an Arctic Fox has been reported scavenging from a waste bin in a layby at Sprowston Hill on the A1151 near Norwich, Norfolk. It was seen on two or three occasions in May and June by motorists who described it as white, with shorter legs than a normal fox.

THE BEAST OF CHISWICK

A strange animal appeared in the London suburb of Chiswick in June. Residents reported a 'scrawny-looking' creature with the body of a dog, a pointed face like a kangaroo, and long thin tail. It had fur the colour of a grey squirrel, and, according to some residents, white spots. Surprisingly, the press failed, for once, to identify it as a 'puma'.

Regular night-time sightings continued through July and August, covering an area of three square miles, with the animal accused of disembowelling pigeons and tearing open sacks of rubbish.

(London Evening Standard 9.8.94)

A NORFOLK SNARLEYOW

Amid a wave of mystery cat fever in Norfolk, another odd creature appeared and stayed around long enough to have its photo taken. RAF historian Raymond Trew noticed the jet-black animal prowling across the sugar-beet field behind his house on the outskirts of Watton at 7am on 3rd July. Raymond had never seen anything like it, and he grabbed his camera and took five consecutive photographs.

The animal was larger and longer-bodied than a big dog, had a snub nose, and a bushy-ended tail which was longer than its body. The line of the stomach was about 6 inches above the sugar beet - then about 9 inches high. As Raymond watched, a hare started up in the field, and the black animal chased it. It 'loped, bounced, pounded along but with no real speed' and eventually disappeared on the other side of the 100 acre field, still in pursuit of the hare.



Picture; Raymond Trew Copyright 1994

high gate into her garden, and large dark-coloured droppings in the middle of the lawn.

Seen through a magnifying glass, the creature photographed does not appear to be a big cat, nor does it look much like a dog or a pony - two other suggested identities. Raymond himself is certain it was neither of these, because of the way it moved. Folklorists will note that the sighting was close to the Peddars Way - long reputed as a haunt of *Black Shuck*, the huge black ghost hound of Norfolk. So what is this creature? Answers on a postcard, please . . . !

(*Eastern Daily Press* 27.6.94, *Thetford & Walton Times* 30.6.94)

MYSTERY CATS

Cornwall

Bob Crooks was driving between Lamorna and Mabe when a large cat crossed the road in front of him. It was three feet from nose to tail, very slender, with a long tail which curled up at the tip. From 40 yards away it looked completely black, but as Mr Crooks got closer he could see patches of dark brown.

(*Western Morning News* 27.7.94)

Kent

Dave Riches of the *Many Hoots Owl Rescue Centre* at Studdal, near Deal, and P C Ian Woodland are closely monitoring reports of leopard-, puma-, and lynx-like cats in East Kent. Reports date back to 1970, but have become more numerous in recent months. Dave has seen a black leopard-like cat on several occasions, and describes it as four feet long, 18 inches to 2 feet tall with a 2 & a half to 3 foot tail.

Prints, territorial markings and faeces have been found, and leopard-like sawing calls heard. But those of you thinking this is a straightforward case of an *escapoo* leopard really should know better! The black cat has orange/amber eyes, and Dave and other witnesses have seen the cat in company with a cub which is light grey with darker 'ink blot' markings.

As far as I can ascertain, neither is normal for a black leopard, 'though there have been other reports of black mystery cats with orange eyes. Anyone with information on these anomalies in leopards, please write in! (East Kent Mercury 25.8.94, 1.9.94, 28.9.94, Dover Express 15.9.94)

Hampshire

Armed police searched the New Forest around Lymington on June 6th for a 'black panther' said to have attacked a collie and broken its leg.

Basingstoke police hunted a lioness following eight sightings around the villages of Bramley and Tunworth between 16th and 20th September. Witness Peter Giles saw the animal 100 yards away in a ploughed field, and pointed it out to a gamekeeper who observed it through binoculars. The animal is described as seven feet long and three feet high, and light brown in colour. Prints found compared in size to those of a Siberian Tiger. The search, involving a police spotter plane, thermal imaging equipment, and six marksmen, was called off on 23rd September. (Daily Mail 20.9.94, 21.9.94, Radio 5 News 21/22/23.9.94)

Oxfordshire

Malcolm Warner of Fencott looked out of his window at 7am, and saw a large jet black cat in a tree at the end of the garden. He was surprised by the brilliance of its yellow eyes, which were very obvious despite the distance of 50 yards. He walked down the garden towards the tree, and took a photograph from about twenty-five yards as the cat began to climb down. Realising how large it was (longer than a labrador), he retreated to the house and the cat walked away into a field of long grass behind the house.

Malcolm had the film developed about a week later, and gave the negative to police when his neighbour 15 year old Lewis Watson had a similar encounter. Lewis was cutting a neighbour's lawn with a motor mower when the cat came out of a hedge about 6 feet away. It stopped and stared at him, then walked back into the hedge. The cat was bigger than Lewis' pet labrador, with jet black, medium length, velvety fur. Further reports were received from Mercott and Stonesfield. (Daily Mail 22.7.94)

Norfolk

A brief summary of multiple sightings throughout the summer months:

June 24th: Armed police hunt for puma-like cat seen at Costessey.

June 28th: Groundsman at Thetford Grammar School reported a dog-sized black cat near the school playing fields.

July 4th: Big cat seen at Brome, where a calf had been found injured a week before.

July 19th: Labrador-sized black cat reported at Mattishall near Dereham.

July 25th: Dark cat-like animal, size of an alsatian dog, crossed road at Talconeston in one bound. Carrying rabbit or hare in mouth. And big cat 'slightly smaller than a Rottweiler' reported at Ashill near Watton.

August 8th: Long-tailed cat-like animal crossed road 30 yards ahead of *Animals and Men* reader Frank Durham on B1108 at Scoulton, near Watton. Described as height of a whippet but longer-bodied, black with vertical grey streaks on sides of body, and white round jowls running down into neck.

September 4th: Large black cat crossed A1088 near Thetford in front of motorist. (*Eastern Daily Press* 15.7.94, 21.7.94, 23.7.94, 25.7.94, 27.7.94)

Nottinghamshire

A 'black panther' was reported in Sherwood Forest by Kath Eggleshaw, who was out walking with her five year old daughter. (*Western Morning News* 20.7.94)

Humberside

Police closed off three square miles of moorland around the village of Rudston Parva, near Bridlington, on 17th August, following a report of a lioness. Mrs Sue Hutchinson saw the animal walk past the hedge at the end of her garden, and watched it through binoculars for ten minutes. She described it as three feet high with a long tail, and was certain it was a lioness. Tourists were advised to avoid the area, and local people to stay indoors, whilst armed police, an RAF helicopter, and vets from the local zoo, searched the area. (*Radio 5 News* 17.8.94, *Daily Mail* 18.8.94)

Co. Durham

Droppings found near a sheep carcase at Whorlton were analysed by Dr Hans Kruuk, who pronounced them to be leopard or puma. (*Daily Mirror* 30.8.94)

Tayside

Warnings were posted at Crombie Country Park, near Dundee, following a sighting of a collie-sized black cat-like animal, with a small head and long tail, on 11th May. Investigations revealed earlier sightings, at

Tannadice near Newbigging, where David Drummond had seen a very large cat like animal near Downie Den in November and again in January. (*The Courier & Advertiser* 13/14/18.5.94)

THREE LEGGED FROGS IN CHINA

Workers in China uncovered a bizarre freak of nature. Work stopped when the builder constructing a school in a village near Beijing, found more than three hundred three legged frogs living in a pit. The cause of the deformity is not known. (*ITV Teletext* p. 324 Sept 18th 1994).

A CRYPTO SAFARI TO NEW ZEALAND

Rex Gilroy, described as 'Australia's biggest butterfly collector' is going to New Zealand in search of the 'Bush Moa' and the legendary New Zealand Man Beast, known to the Maoris as 'Mochau'... "Despite scientific scepticism" he said, "I prefer to keep an open mind. Lack of evidence does not always imply lack of existence". We wish him every success. A selection of recent Man Beast sightings will be found FROM OUR FILES on the inside back page. *Wellington NZ Evening Post* 22.1.94 Via COUD-i

PUMA KILLS JOGGER

We are very loth to print this story for fear that it will add credence to the lobby whose opinion is that Alien Big Cats are a real danger to human beings but unlike some organisations we could mention we are not in the business of allowing our hidden agenda to stand in the way of the free dissemination of information! Barbara Schoener, a young mother of two was jogging along a popular nature trail near Sacramento California, when she was apparently killed by a lone Mountain Lion. Her body which was mutilated and partially eaten was found covered by leaves soon afterwards. Several weeks later a female Puma whose dentition matched the teeth marks on the corpse was shot by Park Rangers who were afraid that this atypical behaviour could have been caused by rabies. The tests proved inconclusive but the female puma turned out to have been a nursing mother and when the cub was taken to Sacramento Zoo, in a delicious twist of irony over twice as much money was pledged by wellwishers for the purpose of looking after the cub than was pledged as a result of a similar appeal for money to aid the orphaned children of the dead jogger. Weird huh? *St Louis Post Despatch* 30.4.94, 2.5.94, 23.5.94 all Via COUD-i

"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE IS IT DOWN TO THE LAKE I FEAR? DA DA DA DA..."

A lake monster known to the locals as 'Nahuelito' was seen by more than 20 people on Lake Nahuel Huapi in Argentina. Jessica Cambell, who lives in Bariloche says "It was about 10 metres long and had several humps and was a grey-green colour". Her friend Paula Jakab said: "When it came up, it made a lot of waves and what really made an impression on me was the way it breathed. It made a really loud sound that was like a snorting or a lowing". Photographs have been taken of the beast which some locals believe is a surviving dinosaur. *Northern Advocate (New Zealand)* 5.1.94 Via COUD-i

Newsfile Correspondents: Alan Beattie, Phil Bennett, Alan Brennan, Pat Buckle, Frank Durham, John Goldsmith, Mhairi Hendrie, Dianne Jones, Angel Morant Forres, Steven Shipp, Dr Karl Shuker, Wolfgang Schmidt, Heather Thurgar, Raymond Trew, John Jacques, Jane Bradley, Sally Parsons, B Williams, R A J Williams.

THE BLACK DOGS OF DARTMOOR.

by Stephen Shipp.

Dartmoor is an area of mysterious raw beauty- one of the last remaining regions of natural wilderness left in England. Step onto Dartmoor soil and one steps onto a land rich in history, legend and mystery. It is here that people have lived and worked for over 3000 years, and scattered between the great granite tors that are such a dominating feature in this National Park, one can find much evidence of earliest inhabitation. The stone huts and enclosures mark the places where these people lived; while stone circles, stone rows, cairns and kists stand testament to their worship and burial practises.

With such a long history and the fact that Dartmoor remains a remote and sparsely populated area-legends and tales of the strange and paranormal have seeded themselves in the fertile imaginations of the local people and grown through centuries as they have been passed down from one generation to the next, and can still chill the bones of the modern 20th century visitor.

There are probably more stories of spectral black dogs and other unearthly hounds in this country than any other animal, and they allegedly haunt many of the lanes, roads, gates and bridges of Devon, with their appearance surviving in place-names, inn signs and lane names. They are always associated with evil, as though they were the hounds of hell descending upon the peaceful Devon countryside. Dartmoor is no exception to the rest of the country.

The Wish, wist or whisht hounds (also known as the Yeth or Heath Hounds) are certainly the most infamous beasts to roam the Dartmoor wilderness and are probably the inspiration for Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle's classic Sherlock Holmes story '*The Hound of the Baskervilles*'. These spectral black dogs with red eyes lead by the Devil (otherwise known as 'Dewer') who rides an eight legged headless black horse, are said to hunt at night for the souls of unbaptised babies.

Wistman's wood (sx 612 773) , half a mile north of two bridges, is an ancient wood of stunted Oaks growing between large granite boulders, and it gives an idea of what Dartmoor would have looked in prehistoric times. These woods are claimed to be one of the most haunted places on Dartmoor, and also the home to the Wish Hounds. It is from here, at midnight, that the feared Wish Hunt is said to emerge in full cry and sweep across the moors in search of their prey. Even when the hounds cannot be seen, their hellish baying and barking, along with Dewer's hunting horn can be heard threww. Anyone unfortunate enough to see this spectre is doomed to die within the year, or even be chased to their death by it.

One story has it that on a wintery night the prints of a naked human foot and a cloven hoof were found in the snow near Dowerstone Rock (sx 538 639), where the the hunt has a habit of leading any curious follower over the precipitous crag there, whilst they vanish to the sounds of hollow laughter, baying and peals of thunder. Another tells of

baying and peals of thunder. Another tells of a drunken farmer returning home from his local inn and meeting the Wish Hunt in full cry. He called out to Dewer asking him if they had caught anything that night. In reply, Dewer threw him a sack which the farmer took believing it was the night's kill. But when he arrived home, he and his wife opened the sack to find that it contained the dead body of their own child!

Hound Tor (sx 743 790), one of the massive granite tors on Dartmoor, has also been linked to this ghostly pack of dogs; it is claimed to be the pack turned to stone, whilst the nearby Bowerman's Nose (sx 742 734), a natural rock formation that has all the appearances of a human head wearing a hat, was the mighty hunter Bowerman. Both were petrified by local witches after they had had their coven disturbed by the Hunt whilst it was in pursuit of its quarry.

The next strange case involves Lady Mary Howard of Fitzford House in Tavistock (sx 48 74) who was said to have married four times, with at least two of her husbands meeting a premature death from her poisoning them. She is also supposed to have murdered two of her children, and these alleged crimes, she has been condemned every midnight to leave the gateway of Fitzford House in a coach built from the bones of her two murdered husbands. This phantom coach is pulled by headless black horses and a headless coachman, with a huge black dog running in front of it. The dog, which is only meant to have one gleaming eye, is said to be Lady Howard herself! This entourage heads to the Norman Castle of Okehampton, where the dog has to pluck a single blade of grass and then return to Fitzford House. It is only when all the grass has been removed will her spirit be free.

Another weird tale of a person being transmuted into a dog after death and given an endless task of Weaver Knowles of the little hamlet of Deanscombe (sx 722 643). The day after this skilled weaver was put into his grave, his family heard noises coming from his upstairs weaving room and looking round the door were shocked to see the old man still working at his loom, obviously refusing to accept he was dead!. They sent for the vicar who told the ghost to come downstairs; this is no place for thee. Thou art in thy grave. Eventually Knowles relented and, as soon as he had descended the stairs, the vicar threw a handful of church consecrated soil into his face. The ghost instantly changed into a black dog and obediently followed the clergyman outside to a large pool near Dean Burn, where the vicar gave him a nutshell with a hole in it. He then told the phantom hound "when thou shalt have emptied the pool with this shell, thou may'st sleep". The place these days is called Hound pool or Houndpond, and it is said that at noon and at midnight the poor animal can be seen working hard trying to empty the pool.

A black dog may be encountered on the road between Princetown and Plymouth, where a local legend states he was the pet of a murdered traveller. This phantom hound is believed to travel along the road searching in vain for his dead owner and had been met on at least one occasion. In the last century, a visitor to the moors, was walking along the road during winter time when he was joined by the animal. Having a liking for dogs he tried to pat its head only to find his hand passed right through it, and he was suddenly hit by a flash of lightning which rendered him unconscious. He didn't wake up until the following day!

A further legend surrounding a large black pig also involves a black dog! A local man returning from the Hexworthy to Pondworthy (sx 701 738) came across a large

orest inn at Hexworthy to Pondworthy (sx 701 738) came across a large black dog which was wondering about. He caught the animal, tied his scarf around its neck and led it home. Here the dog was locked in the stable for the night, but the following morning when the man came to inspect his captive he found instead a large black pig with his scarf around its neck!

Recent cases of black dog sightings are rare though the following report from the 1950's is worth a mention. It occurred along a narrow lane leading to Okehampton where a woman was taking her daughter for a donkey ride. Suddenly, a very large black dog jumped in front from out of a hedge and stood glaring at them before vanishing. The donkey then refused to take another step forward and a longer route home had to be found. The woman knew the lane very well and has never seen the dog before or since this strange encounter.

Finally, and by way of a contrast (quite literally!), there is a white spectral hound which is claimed to still haunt Cator Common (sx 673 778) near Widecombe. It was seen by one woman in the 1960's when she was walking along the edge of a plantation near Cator Gate. In full daylight she saw, coming towards her, a very large cream-coloured dog with a long coat and long ears. As it came close, she put out her hand to stroke it, whereupon it simply vanished.

The map references given are for Ordnance Survey Landranger 191, 201 and 202 (1:500000).

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The search for Artrellia-the Papuan giant lizard

by John Blashford-Snell

(The material in this article has been abstracted and condensed by with kind permission from the author from a chapter in his book 'Mysteries-Encounters with the unexplained')

Mysterious animals were very far from my mind as the Cessna winged past the billowing cumulus boiling up over the vast Sepik Swamp in Papua New Guinea. The endless dark green mat of vegetation, bisected only by the huge meandering river, crept slowly past my window. Watching the brown water I saw only the occasional dugout being paddled by jet black, near naked warriors. A few brightly coloured birds flitted around in the tangled growth at the edge of the waterway, but for the most part this enormous morass seemed totally lifeless. 'In Africa or South America', I said turning to the Papuan officer sitting beside me, 'this area would be teeming with wildlife-does anything large live in these swamps?'

'The biggest mosquitoes in the world's down there', he said with a broad grin, 'then there's the Puk-Puk - that's crocodile, and pigs. We talked about elephants and African big game which my friend had never seen, then he said slowly, 'local men say there's something called Artrellia-a sort of giant crocodile that climbs trees'.

'Have you ever met anyone who claims to have seen it?' I asked. 'No-but there are men at Green River who might tell you about it' said the officer, adding, 'But I'm not sure if these people just see them in their dreams'.

It was early afternoon when we landed at the new concrete runway at the little border settlement of Green River. The heavy humid wall of heat hit us as we stepped out and in seconds perspiration was oozing from every pore. The Defence Force Engineers Camp was a short way from the airfield and as we bumped along the dusty corrugated road in a battered Land Rover I turned to the tanned Australian Sergeant-Major who'd come to meet us, and said casually:

'Ever heard of an animal called Artrellia?'

He shook his head, 'Nope, what is it Colonel? I told him of my conversation in the plane. 'Well - my guess is that they're talking about a salt water croc that gets stuck up a mangrove tree when the tide goes out', he smiled and then said, 'but there'll be an old chief at the 'Mu-Mu' tonight. According to the boys he was quite a hunter in his day, Maybe he could tell you something-you speak Pidgin?' As I didn't a young Papuan Lieutenant wearing a live marsupial like a Davy Crockett hat would give a hand.

The aroma of cooking pork wafted up from the fires as we sat beneath the thatched roof of the mess hut sipping our 'tubes of Fosters'. It was late when the old warrior arrived-he'd put on all his finery for the occasion and seemed delighted that someone was interested in his exploits-but all he knew about Artrellia was based on one

sighting thirty years before and that wasn't a particularly close encounter. However of one thing he was certain-it was no 'Puk-Puk'. So I tried to draw what he described-it wasn't easy, but eventually he seemed satisfied with something which looked vaguely like a dinosaur with a long tail.

'He says it walks upright, climbs trees and breathes fire', I told my hosts. 'Sounds like a bloody dragon' laughed the Sergeant Major, 'better send for St George'. I pushed the sketch in my diary and forgot all about the Arrellia.

It was three years later and the Papua New Guinea phase of Operation Drake was in full swing. Working late one evening I found myself marooned in my office at our headquarters at Lac, by a fearsome tropical storm. Lightning crackled and thunder crashed overhead, shaking the wooden chalet uncertainly and beyond the mosquito netting the rain fell in rods, whipping the surface of the nearby pool into a frenzy.

'No point in getting soaked going for the car', I thought, so I poured a large shot of J and B into the green plastic mug and pulled over a large illustrated book on New Guinea wildlife that was sitting in my 'In' tray. Attached to it was a note from Alan Bibby, our resident producer: 'See p.278-what do you think?' it said.

So I leaned back in the old canvas chair, took a welcome wig of the Scotch and flipped open the volume. The last paragraphs of the page leapt at me, ... '*...dinosaur like....a legendary giant lizard...said to exist in Western Papua...*'

Oblivious to the raging storm I read on. It appeared that many years ago a young Papuan Warrior staggered breathlessly home to his village in a state of shock after a lone hunting trip and blurted out an amazing story. It was said his grandchildren still recall it vividly and they will repeat it word for word, to anyone who penetrates far enough up the Bimatori River to reach their isolated but idyllic village of Giringarede.

It seems that their grandfather was feeling rather weary after hours on the trail and went to sit down and rest on a fallen tree trunk only for the 'tree' to rear up under him and reveal itself as a dragon! It stood over ten feet tall on its hind legs and had wicked looking jaws like a crocodile. The old man did not wait to see if it breathed fire at him-he ran for his life and never once looked back to see if the monster was pursuing him.

It all sounded a bit far fetched but instantly I recalled the meeting with the old chap at Green River. The book mentioned stories very similar to those described in travellers' tales that have been coming out of PNG since the end of the last century-and many of them have come from very reputable sources. During the Second World War Allied and Japanese Patrols operating deep in the most remote parts of the jungle reported catching glimpses of what was most often described as a '*tree climbing crocodile*'.

Some scientists and wildlife experts came to the conclusion that what people might have seen was a giant lizard of the type first officially identified in 1978 as Salvador's Monitor-a close relation of the famed Komodo Dragon of Indonesia. A number of very large specimens of this reptile have been caught in PNG over the years. One, seven foot in length was trapped near the mouth of The Fly river in 1936 by a scientific expedition whilst a trader named John Senior-who ran a general store on the Kikori River-has a skin nailed to his wall which, in life, must have measured a good ten feet. On this evidence, there seemed every reason to suppose that

somewhere in the most inaccessible recesses of the jungle there might lurk some outsize freaks-the equivalent of those 'grandfather' pike and other big fish that anglers sometimes hook from deep, dark pools.

Miss Somere Jogo the PNG Government liaison officer lived in a village in the Western Province so Colonel Blashford-Snell asked her about the mysterious Dragon..

Her smile disappeared, her eyes widened and dropping her voice she leant forward and said with meaning, '*I know it exists-many of my people have seen it. They say it climbs trees, walks upright-especially at night-kills men, makes a whistling sound, and breathes fire*'.

I gulped the last of my whisky. This girl was deadly serious. 'Have you ever seen one?' I questioned. 'No, but they are to be found in the bush and swamps near my home. The people are very afraid of them. An old man was killed by a female a few years ago.'

'What do you call it?' I asked. 'Artrellia-or in English, Dragon', was the instant reply. The last flickers of lightning were on the Eastern horizon as I walked to my car deep in thought. What a challenge.

The next day a couple of phone calls to Government scientists confirmed the general belief that there was something worth going after -and that the authorities would welcome an investigation. So Dorian Huber, a Swiss Young Explorer, accompanied by Somere went off on a reconnaissance and ten days later came back with photographs of a seven foot lizard and reports of others even bigger. These were not Artrellia, but nevertheless I decided to mount a search for what would undoubtedly be the longest lizard in the world.

After a not uneventful three day voyage, we came into Daru, the provincial capital at midday, and whilst the good ship Andewa refuelled, I rushed off to find Somere and to meet her uncle Mr Tatty Olewale OBE, Premier of the Western Province. We found him at home having lunch and reading from a gigantic leather bound Bible, whilst his pet parakeet hopped about on his shoulders. The Premier rose to greet us with the words, '*Colonel it is the Lord who has brought you to us*'. I was inclined to agree. In no time Mr Olewale summoned his brother, the head postman, who was able to tell us a great deal about Artrellia. He confirmed that an elderly man had died in the Daru hospital after being attacked by one which appeared to be a female protecting her nest. The Premier wished us well and presented everyone with a small gift before sending us off with his niece, Somere, and a wizened old pilot as river guide.

Next day we anchored off Masingara and marched the half mile inland to Somere's well ordered home village of traditional stilt supported bamboo huts. There, I was ushered by her brother, Seyu, towards a hundred year old woman, who was the most senior citizen and who was said to know more than anyone about the Artrellia having seen several in her lifetime.

The white haired old lady confirmed many of the things that we had already heard: that these creatures grew to over fifteen feet in length; that they often stood on their hind legs and so gave the appearance of dragons, or to our mind mini dinosaurs; also that they were extremely fierce.

This last point brought much nodding from the village hunters, who made it quite obvious that they treated even the smaller six or seven footers-which they said were quite common-with the greatest respect. This came as no

surprise since we had already been told of an incident in another village where a captured Artrellia had smashed its way out of a stout cage and killed a large dog, before escaping back into the forest. Now we learned that the creature's method of hunting was to lie in wait in the trees before dropping onto its victims and tearing them to shreds with its powerful claws. Apart from that, it possessed a very infectious bite as a result of feeding on carrion and this could bring death within a matter of hours. There were plenty of stories of men who had been attacked and killed by the Artrellia.

During the next few days we split into four patrols and combed the surrounding jungle; everyone we met understood immediately when we explained what we were looking for and claimed that they themselves had seen such creatures. The nearest we got to a sighting was when the local dogs which accompanied one patrol put up something that crashed off heavily through the undergrowth without showing itself.

'It's said to move at night-so we'd better try a spot of night hunting', I said to the slightly dispirited patrols so at dusk three of us set out, armed to the teeth, and carrying an Army image intensifier which enhances existing light to such an extent that even that of a few stars will enable a soldier to shoot accurately at a hundred yards using the device as a rifle sight.

After an exciting and eventful night when the patrol managed to spot several interesting denizens of the Papuan forest but after several false alarms singularly failed to spot anything even slightly resembling a monstrous lizard Colonel Blashford-Snell in his own words *'decided that there must be easier ways of solving this mystery'*.

On the Sunday before Christmas, he went to Matins in the little village church and after the service he paused to talk to the vicar.

'Do you believe in Artrellia?' I asked. He'd been educated in Australia and I reckoned he would be a sensible vicar. *'I know he exists-I sometimes wish he didn't, 'cos my people think him's a devil, like an evil spirit, 'but him just an animal-bad animal sometime'*. *'Well if we caught one would it convince your flock that it was no evil spirit?'* I asked. *'Sure'*, he nodded his head. *'Then how on earth can we do that?'* *"Oh you fellows won't catch him-you makes too much noise tramping around the bush-you needs good hunters"*, he stated firmly and added as an afterthought, *'My choirboys is plenty good hunters'*.

'How much to hire your choir?' I asked. *'I needs a new church roof'*, smiled the little priest looking wistfully at the tattered thatch. *'How much will that cost?'* I asked.

'Ten dollars' was his quick reply. However he suggested that I offer the reward to the village council that evening and in that way I'd get all the hunters helping. Ten dollars (or Kina) would be a months wage. *'But don't tell 'dem fellows about the reward 'til 7 o'clock'*, he cautioned, *'cos I want to leave at 5 -oh yes, and can you let me have some shotgun shells?'*

Sure enough the mere mention of money was followed by a mass exodus into the jungle of every able bodied man in the village, armed with everything from bows and arrows to an antique blunderbuss. It was as we steamed back down the Pahotori after a trip upriver which produced no actual sightings but plenty of confirmation that what we were looking for did indeed exist,

We received a radio message from the base reporting that the vicar had managed to shoot a big lizard deep in the forest and was on his way back to Masingara with it. We returned to the village at full speed and by the time we arrived, a large crowd had already gathered around a strange creature which was lying at their feet roped to a bamboo pole. 'It's alive' muttered Mike as Ian bent to examine the reptile. Chris Sainsbury's cameras were already clicking as I handed the ten kina bill to the vicar who assured me that this was *Artrellia*. Its dark green skin was flecked with yellow spots and its square head housed a set of needle like teeth. The eyes twitched malevolently as it tried to squeeze itself out of the vines binding it to the pole, but the most impressive part of its anatomy were the claws-at the end of its short thick legs were enormous, black scimitars, out of proportion to the rest of its body. The tail was long and thin and twice the length of the body. I noticed that the village dogs kept well away from the dying beast with its terrible talons. The mouth and tongue gave a red/yellow effect-'fire' said the priest and I saw how the legend had been started by the tongue flickering in sunlight. Ian pushed in the syringe and *Artrellia* passed quietly into death. As soon as it was safe to handle measurements were taken.

It was no dragon, but, it was still a pretty fearsome creature at just over six feet from head to tail. Once Ian had performed his post mortem he was able to confirm that it was only a youngster which left plenty of room for speculation about what size an overgrown adult might reach. A patrol that had been keeping vigil beside a remote water hole, which we had been told was a haunt of the creatures, came back with reports that they had seen several sizeable specimens coming down to drink, but had been unable to get near enough to photograph them in the dark. We did catch a glimpse of one monster with a head like a horse peering at the photographers over a fallen log. Ian made several sightings of impressive adult lizards of lengths up to twelve feet, and from our specimen we know that *Artrellia* was indeed Salvador's Monitor-but no-one had dreamed of the size to which these killers can grow. But the question now is how big DO they grow?

OROBOROUS IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN EASTBOURNE

We are indebted to our Sussex Representative Sally Parsons for this fascinating story and for the accompanying photograph which was so 'odd' that we had to put it on our front cover. The photograph originally appeared in the Eastbourne on May 25th this year accompanying a story headlined: YEUK! KEN GRIPS MONSTER WORM! about a 'seven foot wriggler' found on a flower bed at Manor Gardens in the town. According to Bruce Porter the contracts manager at Sercoserve (presumably the private firm contracted to clean municipal areas in the town) "I was told by my staff who came face to face with it that it appeared to be very similar to an earthworm although there was a suggestion that it was a parasitic worm".

Sally interviewed Bruce Porter by 'phone on the 30th June. He confirmed the details given in the 'Gazette' article. The worm was found dead on a flower bed by a member of the public raising the question of whether the animal came out of the ground at this point or whether it was carried there by some other agency. Regrettably I have to dismiss Sally's suggestion of a secret society called 'Worm Dumpers Anonymous', and can only say that Ken Hughes (see front cover) who was on the spot and examined the carcass confirms that it was one single worm and not a deliberate fabrication of small ones joined together or a similar hoax. From his experience in the gardening trade he says that it appeared to be an ordinary earthworm. Although the creature was of local interest as a 'freak' it was not a record holder (the British record Earthworm was 13 feet in length and the world record is held by a South American 33 footer) after being photographed this 20th century descendant of 'Oroborous the Midgard Serpent' was consigned ignominiously to the rubbish skip!

MYSTERY CATS - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by Jan Williams

The biggest mystery relating to mystery cats is why, more than thirty years after the 'Surrey Puma', they remain a mystery. Why, in a country which is home to some of the greatest zoological institutions in the world, it seems impossible to explain a minor item in the annals of cryptozoology.

For a variety of reasons, mystery cat reports produce extreme reactions in a way that other immigrant species, like wallabies or muntjac, fail to do. At times the whole thing feels more like an evangelical crusade than an attempt to understand a fascinating aspect of natural history.

A few years ago, enquiries to orthodox zoologists regarding 'mystery cats' were generally met with the kind of wary reserve the British tend to use for someone who gets on the bus wearing striped pyjamas and a bucket over their head. One would be kindly informed that the General Public were incapable of recognizing animals such as foxes, deer, dogs, and so on, and frequently became firmly convinced that next door's moggy was, in fact, a full grown lion. There was little point in anyone with a proper job investigating such reports - it wasn't as if there was any real evidence.

Such attitudes die hard, and, although dented by recent video evidence, still prevail amongst the very people whose expertise is needed to understand the nature of the various Beasts. Many will now accept the existence of a few escapee animals, but will not countenance eye-witness reports suggesting that large cats exist, and are breeding, throughout Britain.

Norfolk Cats.

Acceptable physical evidence, in the form of spoor, hair samples, remains of prey, dens, and the carcasses of the cats themselves, has proved remarkably hard to find. There are three main problems; firstly, the elusive nature of cat species; secondly, knowing what to look for; and thirdly, having sufficient time and enthusiasm to keep searching.

The efforts of Heather, Louise and Jane Thurgar over the past twelve months have produced at least some definite evidence of large cats in the vicinity of Aslacton in South Norfolk. The county has a long history of cat reports, although it has never attained the notoriety of Bodmin or Exmoor. Heather, local representative for Farmwatch, an organisation set up to monitor attacks on livestock, became involved when she was called out to see a dead calf, which did not seem to have been killed by dogs or foxes.

Very briefly, the evidence is as follows:

1. Faeces found near to the carcass of a day-old calf at Fornett St Peter, and containing calf hair. The sample was sent to Michael Lawrence, joint author of 'The Country Life Guide to Animals of Britain and Europe' (Newnes Books, 1984), and 'Mammals of Britain' (Blandford 1967), who stated that it did not conform to that of any British carnivore, and corresponded in size and appearance to that of a puma.

2. Casts of prints taken from a field at a point where a large puma-like cat had been seen crossing the road. Measuring 7cm wide by 9cm long, and sunk deeply into clay, the prints clearly show 3 lobes at the rear of the heel pad. Large claws are evident on both prints, and retractile claw sheaths can be seen on two toes.

Prints are frequently dismissed as 'dog' purely because they show claw marks. This is not an acceptable diagnostic technique, as can be seen from the following extracts from 'A Mountain Lion Field Guide' (H.G. Shaw, 1979; Special Report No. 9; Arizona Fish and Game Dept, Phoenix, Arizona)

'Size and shape of the heel pad is the best characteristic to use in distinguishing (mountain) lion tracks from those of large dogs... Most diagnostic are the three distinct lobes in the rear of the heel... Some dogs can travel on hard ground without showing distinct claw marks, while a lion moving fast will often show claws.'

The Norfolk prints were shown to Michael Lawrence who confirmed they were those of a large cat, probably a puma. More large prints were found in snow at Caistor St Edmund and confirmed as cat prints by John Goldsmith of Norwich Castle Museum.

3. A den located in the side of a dry ditch, measuring 4 feet 6 inches in length, 2 feet in height, and 2 feet 6 inches in depth. Well concealed behind an ivy-hung fallen tree, the den showed none of the signs normally associated with fox or badger. Scratchmarks and broken and chewed branches were found on a tree directly behind the den, and several large holes had been dug into the earth by an animal powerful enough to rip through tree roots. A trail of large and small prints, showing the definitive three lobes on the heel pad, was found a few yards from the den site, suggestive of an adult and cub.

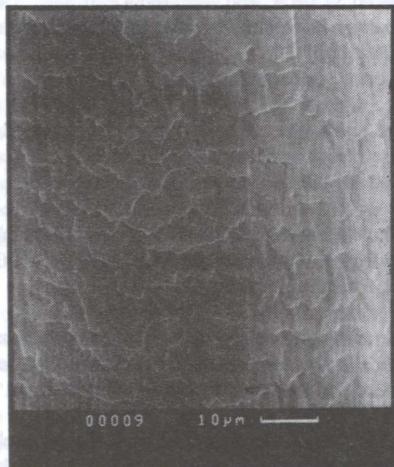
4. Hair samples taken from a barbed wire fence (Sample A) and from the den (Sample B) were sent to Dr Andrew Kitchener of the Royal Scottish Museum and Dr Lars Thomas in Denmark, who had kindly agreed to attempt analysis.

Dr Kitchener commented:

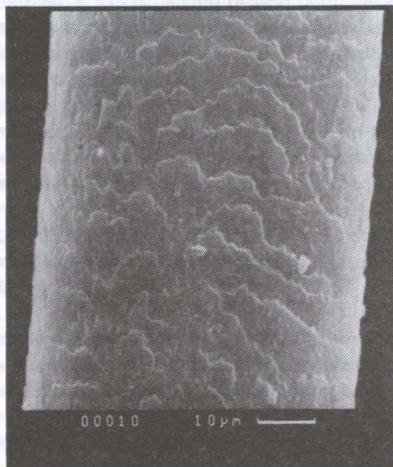
'I don't think your samples are similar to either puma or leopard (or cats in general)'.

Dr Thomas agreed with this.

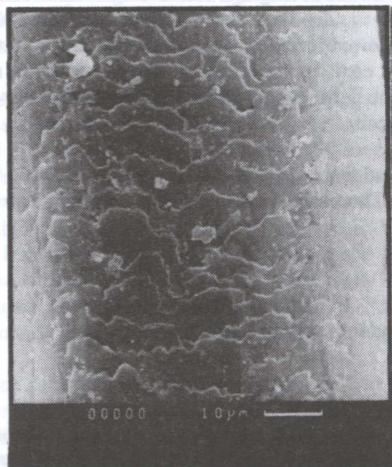
He considered Sample A to be from a cow or horse, and B possibly a canid. This was obviously disappointing, although the connection between the hair samples and large cats was tenuous. Electron microscope photographs of the samples, together with those of puma and leopard, are reproduced here (with thanks to Dr Kitchener) and, if anyone has the facilities and interest to take this further, sample hairs are available!



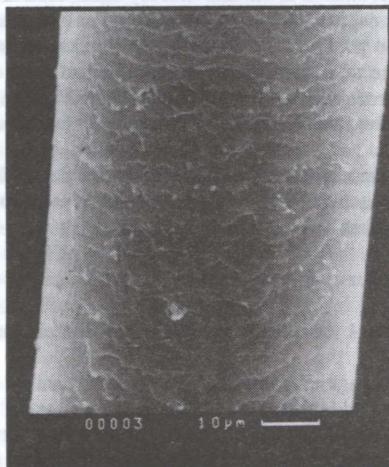
Electron Microscope Photograph of
Sample A.



Electron Microscope Photograph of
Sample B.



Electron Microscope Photograph of
Hair Sample from Leopard
(*Panthera pardus*).



Electron Microscope Photograph
of Hair Sample from Puma (*Felis*
concolor).

5. Remains of prey. The calf found dead at Fornett St Peter in August 1993 had been totally eviscerated some 50 to 60 lbs of meat having been eaten. The left ear had been pulled out by the roots, and the tongue eaten. It was a very clean kill, with little trace of blood left in the field. Another calf had been found dead about three quarters of a mile away, the previous week. One ear had been pulled out and the tongue eaten, but there were no other injuries. This was one of twins, born during the night, and it was assumed it had been born dead. The killing of the second calf may have been triggered by scavenging on the first.

A sheep found dead a few miles away, and attributed to 'the puma' was a messier kill, and probably the work of stray dogs which were known to have attacked sheep on a nearby farm. No other attacks on livestock were reported in the area, despite frequent sightings of large cats over a twelve month period, but the rabbit population decreased noticeably!

The figure of 300 lbs of meat per week is often quoted as the requirement for an adult puma, and leads sceptics to suggest that a feral puma would cause very obvious devastation to livestock. This figure is a ridiculous over-estimate, a point well-made by zoo-keeper Alan Pringle of the Welsh Mountain Zoo in a letter to *Fortean Times* (No. 74). He pointed out that zoo pumas are adequately fed on 10-20 lbs of meat (on the bone) per day, and a wild one could survive on one roe-deer a week, or a diet of small mammals and birds. Reports of large cats, along with those of more normal British predators, have increased dramatically across the whole country in the last couple of years, closely following the recovery of the rabbit population.

6. Eye witness evidence comprises sightings of at least three different cats. The first, sandy-brown in colour, is larger than a labrador dog, with a noticeably longer body and tail, and a small cat-like head. It is capable of running extremely fast and leaping over 8 foot hedges, and has been seen jumping out of a tree. The second animal is slightly smaller, heavily muscled, and jet black in colour. The two were seen together on one occasion.

A third, smaller cat, was seen very close to the den site. This was brown, with darker spotted markings, and may have been a cub. Recent reports of a plain brown coated cat, smaller than the one referred to above, could possibly be this same animal, now a young adult. These three cats have been seen within a small area of less than twenty square miles. Elsewhere in the county, there have been numerous reports of large cats - some puma or leopard-like, others bearing unusual markings or thick woolly coats, and difficult to identify with any known species.

To the north of Norwich, a dog-sized cat-like animal was found dead in a country lane, by a motorist who described it as having a pale sandy coat with darker markings like 'cartoon seagulls', and with the texture of short lambswool. Unfortunately, it was several days before he mentioned it to anyone with an interest in the subject, and the carcass had, by then, disappeared. The lane runs alongside an area of woodland where a very large black cat (larger and more powerful than a Rottweiler dog according to reports) has been seen many times over a five year period.

Variations on a Theme.

The variations in size, build, colour and markings described by witnesses, are perhaps the most confusing, and

The most intriguing aspect of mystery cat reports. Unfortunately, they also push the subject beyond the limits of belief for many people. A few escapee pumas, or even leopards, in the country are one thing - cats which don't conform to any known species are something else altogether. In an article in SCAN News 18 months ago, I suggested Asian Jungle Cats could be responsible for many reports - an idea which, in the light of new evidence, I have reluctantly abandoned as regards the country as a whole, though it remains relevant in the North Midlands and parts of Hampshire and Surrey.

Hybridization between species is a possibility which is frequently dismissed out of hand. Technically, leopards are 'Big Cats' (genus *Panthera*) and pumas 'Small Cats' (genus *Felis*) and therefore should not interbreed. However, prior to 1940, a number of German Zoos did succeed in producing leopard/puma hybrids. Armand Denis refers to one reared at Carl Hagenbeck's Tierpark in 'Cats of the World' (Constable, 1964): 'It was apparently the survivor of three sets of twins borne by a leopardess to a male puma. It had male characteristics, a long tail, and was intermediate in coat colour and pattern between its parents - having pale leopard-like spots on a puma ground - but it was only half their size'.

A photograph of this animal (for which I am indebted to Dr Karl Shuker) shows it to be strongly muscled, and very broad-chested, with a small head, thus conforming to many eye-witness descriptions of the 'Beast of Exmoor', amongst others.

Time of change.

In the course of the last year, the status of British Mystery Cats has suddenly altered. Things are getting serious. On 30th August, a conference was held in Bodmin to discuss the alleged activities of the 'Beast of Bodmin Moor'. Organised by North Cornwall MP Paul Tyler, it was attended by Mike Highman, regional director of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and representatives from the Department of the Environment, National Farmers' Union, Country Landowners Association and Police. Whilst the evidence presented was deemed inconclusive, it was agreed that MAFF would investigate further and present a report to Angela Browning, Junior Agriculture Minister, who would decide on further action.

On 6th September, the Eastern Daily Press in Norfolk ran an article headlined 'It's OK To Shoot Killer Lions, Farmers Are Told', based on a (perfectly correct) statement from a MAFF spokesman to the effect that the cats are not protected by law. Similar articles appeared in the West Country and the Midlands, whilst reports of large cats in Kent caused a run on rifles and shotguns in the biggest gun-shop in the area, as would-be Big Game Hunters sought their moment of fame. Animal welfare groups and farming organisations expressed their concern at the danger posed by amateurs taking pot-shots at large, and as yet unidentified, predators; not to mention other inhabitants of the British countryside like livestock, children and courting couples.

Four police hunts have taken place during the last few months, with armed marksmen backed by helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. I doubt if Jim Corbett would have endorsed these methods, though they should be of comfort to those among us who would prefer the animals to survive; and are perhaps safer than the method suggested earlier this year by a gentleman who shall remain nameless, which involved army helicopters equipped with heat-seeking missiles.

Where Do We Go From Here?

In the transformation of British Mystery Cats from mass hallucination to Public Enemy Number One there seems to be a step missing - that boring bit involving things like evidence, investigation, analysis, identification, truth, and so on. There are theories in abundance, but none are, as yet, proven. Before we bring the full might of modern weaponry into play against these animals, might it not be a good idea to use some of our more civilised skills to find out what they are, and how much danger they actually pose?

The evidence detailed in this article has been collected by a small group of people, and analysed by others whose time and expertise has been freely given. There are many people in Britain who are in a position to contribute to the investigation - naturalists, zoo-keepers, natural historians and zoologists in museums and universities. If they would treat the subject objectively, consider the facts not the fallacies, and make use of the techniques and equipment available, I have no doubt that this particular mystery could soon be resolved.

Whilst the Bodmin Conference has increased the level of serious interest in the subject, concern has been expressed regarding the choice of MAFF to lead future investigations. The legal situation is confusing, but it would appear that exotic escapees are the responsibility of the Home Office, whereas MAFF take responsibility for established (breeding) populations of exotic animals, and the Department of the Environment may be involved if the cats are a native species. Given the probability of claims from farmers for damage to livestock if the existence of these large cats is proven, and the build up of evidence showing that they are indeed breeding in the wild, MAFF's objectivity is certain to be questioned.

When government departments become involved in 'mystery' areas, conspiracy theories begin. Rumours of suppression of information, destruction of evidence, and secret plans to deploy army divisions to beat through woodland shooting any large cats they may happen across, are already rife. The relationship between rumour and reality is a tenuous one, but the atmosphere of mistrust created prevents people from volunteering information, and is not conducive to an objective investigation.

British mystery cats are no longer a joke. The subject concerns us all, and deserves a properly conducted scientific investigation by an independent study group, with funding and resources supplied by central government. Decisions regarding responsibility, and any action to be taken, should not be made until the necessary information is available. Zoology, like charity, ought to begin at home.

Editorial Comment: Both Jan Williams and I would welcome responses to this article submitted for publication on our letters page. We would not only like responses to the evidence enclosed above and to the various theories included within the article but we particularly want to discover the views of the 'Animals and Men' readership as to what should be done next by both private researchers and most importantly by The Government and Official Agencies who have now become involved in, whatever your viewpoint, is undoubtedly the most exciting event in British Natural History for several centuries.

LETTERS

this issue, by popular demand, we are instigating what we hope will become a forum for debate, discussion and good natured argument. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for publication on grounds of space. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or of The Centre for Fortean Zoology.

Dear Editor

I wonder if you or any of your contributors would care to comment on a phenomenon which we had the privilege to see some years ago when serving in West Africa. My wife and I had been on tour in bush and had just returned to our bungalow in station when we found that the gardener or nightwatchman (known in Nigeria as the watchman) had left a filthy pile of old potato sacks on the back verandah. Our house servant was a very sophisticated townie from Lagos a bit of a wide boy who despised all the locals with whom we had dealings "Dey be bush men to much!" he would say implying that he and his fellow townsmen were vastly superior to Northern Nigerian peasants.

Ignatius, for that was his name helped me move the sacks murmuring to himself about the stupid bushmen who had left such a mess when from under the sordid pile ran a large black scorpion. I went to crush it with my boot but Ignatius pushed me aside and said "No touch him Master" and to our astonishment picked up the scorpion placed it on the pink palm of his hand and carried it gently towards the compound hedge. We could see the insect stinging his palm, over and over again but he took no notice and talked gently to it as he walked slowly away from the bungalow towards the surrounding bush. My wife and I watched in amazement and, when he reached the hedge, he gently placed the insect on the ground and it scuttled away into the bush. We expressed our astonishment but Ignatius, for a moment, no longer a Lagos 'wide-boy', but very much a wise tribal 'elder', was not prepared to discuss the incident except to explain that his people (presumably his sub-tribe), had some kind of pact with scorpions- he added, we should never kill scorpion while he was in our employ. We had heard of strange relationships of this kind but never thought to witness such an extraordinary spectacle.

Can anyone explain it?

yours sincerely

Retired Colonial officer.

People who lived and worked in the former Colonies were in a unique position to collect otherwise unobtainable data. As the colonial era ended for the most part thirty years ago, if such fascinating anecdotal evidence such as this must be collected while there is still time. Our latest project is to make a collection of such stories from Ex Colonial Service Officers. If you feel that you can help us in this very important project please contact us at the Editorial Address

" NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THAT... BUT RABBITS DO."

Domestic rabbits almost invariably make their nests and keep their young in the back left-hand corner of their hutches. This is taken for granted by rabbit fanciers and confirmed by my own long experience not only in Britain but also in France. South of the equator, however, I have observed that it is the back right-hand corner that is chosen, again with almost invariable frequency. Is this due to the same mechanism that alters the direction in which the bath water flows down the plug hole in Southern hemisphere? Or is it an effect of Dr.Rupert Sheldrake's "morphic resonance"? ROGER HUTCHINGS

"THAT'S ANOTHER FINE NESS YOU'VE GOT ME INTO"

predictably enough Stuart Leadbetter's article in the last issue excited a lot of comment...

I would describe myself as an ever -hopeful sceptic when it comes to reports of the Loch Ness monster so I reluctantly agree with Stuart Leadbetter's views about the Plesiosaur. However, an even stronger case against a surviving dinosaur is simply the fact that Loch Ness was under miles of ice only 10,000 years ago. Much as it disappoints me this fact alone I think points to a non-cryptozoological explanation for the Loch Ness creature (and therefore by implication for most 'northern' lake monsters). I'm not even sure we have a creature whose 'body form can be easily mistaken for (a plesiosaur)' as Stuart puts it. This assumption is apparently based on many eyewitness accounts (although certainly not the 'thousands' referred to) but as a keen birder I've got to say how poor the observation skills of most people are.

The only truly consistant reports from Loch Ness refer to the 'upturned boat' shape which gives rise to rather more mundane explanations than a long snake-like neck. I personally think that the reports of the head and neck (which are less numerous than those of 'humps') are probably cases of mistaken identity undoubtedly influenced by the famous, but now apparently discredited, Surgeon's Photograph. The other arguement against a 'monster' is the lack of hard evidence from earlier periods namely with the one exception of a newspaper report referring to a 'giant fish' in the loch I'm not aware of any reports whose publication predates the 1930's monster flap.

Why, for instance, did General Wade's men not report anything unusual during their road-building period at the loch? Why weren't there a spate of sightings at the height of the Victorian fascination with the Highlands and for that matter if there was such a strong local tradition of a monster why didn't the Victorian entrepreneurs exploit it? As I've said before I hope I'm proved wrong on this issue but unless anyone can put up a convincing alternative case I remain sceptical of anything more than a wayward sturgeon being responsible for the phenomena.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Morgan.

Dear Mr Downes,

Let me first congratulate you with your fine journal. I think that the contents of the issues so far is very good. I have been studying the Loch Ness matter for 15 years now and as you asked for opinions on the article by Stuart Leadbetter I thought of writing some lines about it. I think the article is very clear and makes it very obvious that a plesiosaur is not a likely candidate for a Nessie. It is however not the first time that the plesiosaur-theory was criticized in this way so the article was not that revolutionary. What I would like to point out is that Nessie may not be a Plesiosaur but eyewitness accounts give the impression that it has Plesiosauric features, especially in shape.

This is what probably constructed a Plesiosaur-theory which should be pointing to a plesiosaur-shaped animal and not a actual Plesiosaur (for the obvious reasons mentioned in the article). I would also like to make a comment on the statement that "*In all the thousands of sightings, not one describes Nessie plucking a bird from the air in midflight*". Let me start by saying it is very dangerous to be so certain about this as I wonder if Mr. Leadbetter actually read all these thousands of sightings. Personally I still wonder if there are thousands of sightings. In the 15 years that I am working on the subject, I have been able to contact "only" 1300 (a slowly growing number has some books still have to be worked on) sightings from some 150 books, 700 newspaper clippings, some videos and some tapes. I am sure that that's not all of them but I never heard of someone actually having/showing a larger collection. Another point that I would like to make is that there is a sighting, if my recollection is right, where a Nessie was in Inchnacardoch bay but I would have to check all my material to be certain and that takes quite a lot of time and I dont think it realy that important.

Keep up the good work.

yours faithfully,

Martien Mannetje, The Netherlands.

More letters on the subject of Loch Ness, both for and against the theories propounded by Stuart Leadbetter will be found in the letters page of the next issue.

In brief..

We received several letters about the mysterious creatures of Lake Niu Gini in Papua New Guinea as mentioned last issue. These letters were not submitted for publication so we shall not quote them verbatim. Mike Grayson of London drew our attention to Heuvelmans' 'Annotated Checklist of Apparently Unknown Animals' (1986), which mentions 'Migo' a giant crocodile described by W.T Neill in 1956. Mike suggested that although as pointed out by Karl Shuker during his talk at Unconvention 1994, the vertical undulations of the spine observed in 'Migau', suggest a mammalian identity (Roy Mackal suggests a Zeuglodon), in his opinion "the rather uncertain food supply of the fish free lake... would better maintain the metabolism of a cold blooded reptile". Dr Heuvelmans wrote to us including a copy of the original 1956 reference, and suggested that as the vertical spinal undulations made a mammalian identity certain, a possible identity was his own 'many humped' beast described in 'In the wake...'. Me? I'm staying out of it until I see the video

THE A-Z OF CRYPTOZOLOGY

Part Three by Jan Williams

BOOAA; Huge hyena-like beast of West Africa, whose name comes from its screaming cry.

BOOBRIE; Legendary giant water bird of Argyllshire lochs, Scotland.

BRUCKEE; Plantigrade water monster, said to live in Lough Shandagan, Ireland.

BUNYIP; A 'catch all' term for various Australian mystery beasts and 'Bogey Men'. Where as in Cryptozoology it is usually used to describe various large aquatic and semi aquatic denizens of marshes and lakes all over the continent, (the two most familiar are a long necked 'Neasic' type creature and another large animal which is most probably either a freshwater seal or less convincingly a large freshwater Sireman), the term 'Bunyip' in popular parlance in Australia and New Zealand is used to describe any unknown 'bogey man' figure only generally believed in by children and unsophisticated adults.

A Childrens Television programme called 'Bunyip' which was screened in the late 1980s featured the adventures of a sub ET type creature with mildly entertaining psi powers stranded on earth (actually a middle class Melbourne housing Estate populated by 'cute kids') after its flying saucer had broken down.

BURU; Aquatic animal which once lived in the valley of the Apa Tanis in the eastern Himalayas, and may still exist in the Rilo Valley. Thick-bodied, with a long and powerful tail and extended flat-tipped snout, the Buru reached a length of up to 13.5 feet. They had long forked tongues, four stumpy limbs, and a fish-like skin with 3 bony plates on the head and rows of spines along the back and sides.

In winter, the Burus disappeared into the mud at the bottom of the swamp and in summer sometimes crawled onto the banks to bask in the sun. They occasionally gave a loud bellowing call, which may be the origin of the name.

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B.Goodwin, 6 Peter Street, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7QB

NERVOUS TWITCH

more tales of the wild, the wonderful and the downright wierd from the world of Ornithology.

POLLY WANTS A WEE DRAM SQUAWK!!!

I recently received an amusing story from our roving Scottish reporter, of a somewhat unusual advertising campaign, in 19th century Edinburgh. It seems a firm called Pattison and co.(Whisky blenders and brokers) decided to promote their product using parrots! They acquired several hundred African Grey parrots and spent many hours teaching them to say "Drink Pattisons Whisky". The birds were then handed around to the pubs and bars in the area to pass on their message. Things went a little awry, however, when many of them escaped, and took to the rooftops of Edinburgh, still frantically urging people, years later, to "Drink Pattisons Whisky! " Beats T.V commercials any day!

(*Edinburgh Evening News* 8.6.94.)

SCOTTISH GUINEA FOWL

Guinea Fowl are reputed to be roaming the wilds of Angus, in Scotland, after game dealers brought them in to diversify their trade. Some birds escaped and are believed to have bred in the wild. Guinea Fowl originate from the grasslands of Africa, but have long been domesticated. In the wild they live in very large flocks, and although mostly ground dwelling, roost in trees. They can be recognised by the bright scarlet patch on their heads. (14.5.94)

QUACK!!!

A pair of Merganser ducks living on the Exe Estuary, in Devon, have bred this year and produced a family. These ducks are hardly ever seen south of Yorkshire in the U.K. Also seen recently on The Exe was a large Black Swan. Australian. Black Swans have been kept for many years in Dawlish, some fifteen miles away but the bird seen several times over the summer appeared to have a white beak rather than the red one more usually associated with the Australian species. One of the witnesses was in fact the Editor of this magazine who vouches for the fact that in other respects the bird seemed identical to the Dawlish birds. Here it should perhaps be noted that the British Black Swan itself is a mythical heraldic beast with slightly unpleasant undertones. The swan in any case is the embodiment of lies and falsehood because although its feathers are snowy white its skin and flesh are black, the allegorical meaning of an all black swan is therefore more than a little disturbing!

(*Exeter Express and Echo* 14.10.94)

SOME FOLK ARE SOOOO GULLIBLE!

A young man was travelling along the road on his motorbike, in Tuscany, recently when he was unexpectedly attacked. However, it was not by muggers or thieves as you might think, but by seagulls! A flock of approximately 100 of them flew up from the ground and assaulted him violently, knocking him off his bike. They then continued to peck at him as he lay on the road. One bird died in the scuffle, and the young man was taken to hospital where he was treated for cuts and bruises. (Daily Telegraph 28.6.94)

A WHITER SHADE OF PALE..

A very rare albino cormorant was seen and photographed in the Forth Estuary during July this year. Many species of birds have albino mutations occasionally, but this is extremely rare in cormorants. (about 1 in 50,000). This bird has been seen regularly on the rocks known as the Haystacks, off Inchcolm, and has been seen flying in with nesting material. Twitchers are hoping that it will breed. If it does, its offspring are likely to be a mixture of albino, mottled and normal black coloured. An albino puffin has also been recorded in the same area in the past. (Edinburgh Evening News 15.7.94)

BLOWING IN THE WIND..

In the Isles of Scilly a Yellow Browed Bunting, blown off course from Asia, caused quite a stir. This species has only been seen in Britain 3 times before. Another rare visitor, the Red Flanked Bluetail, was also seen this week, in Norfolk. (BBC Ceefax Newsround 20.10.94)

TO WIT TO WOO

Controversy is raging at the moment in the owl keeping world. The Baytree Owl Centre, at Weston, near Spalding, has managed to breed a South American Burrowing Owl with a Little Owl. This has angered some bird keepers, and also the World Owl Trust, who consider this to be irresponsible, and liable to endanger the species by dilution. However, this was not a deliberate breeding attempt. It was the birds who took the initiative. The two species were housed together in a large aviary at the centre, and for some reason a male Burrowing Owl ejected his own female, and took a female Little Owl as his mate. To everyone's surprise she nested underground, contrary to the Little Owl's usual habit of nesting in holes in trees, and successfully reared a youngster. Nobody is quite sure why this happened. Maybe it was love at first flight! (Cage and Aviary Birds 3.9.94, 15.10.94.)

I would just like to mention the 10th Anniversary Psychic Questing Conference on the 5th and 6th November, at Conway Hall in London. With speakers such as Doc Shiels, and many interesting and diverse lectures, for only 10.00 a day it represents very good value. Go along and give them your support. We'll certainly be there! (PROBABLY IN THE BAR...ED)

HELP

This is the part of the magazine where we attempt to answer your queries, help with your research work and appeal for assistance with our various projects.....

It is always nice to be able to give some Answers for a change, and this issue due to the kind services of Sally Parsons and Karl Shuker I am able to give some information asked in our first issue six months ago by our good friend and Spanish Representative, ALBERTO LOPEZ ACHA. He asked about the animal that then, was the most exciting discovery in mammalogy for fifty years. As can be seen from our news pages this issue and elsewhere mammalogists especially in Vietnam are suffering from the most acute forms of Ennui suffered by anyone since Darwin, (one can just imagine him sitting in his cabin on The Beagle yawning 'Oh Lord not ANOTHER new species!') but by anyone's standards the Vu Quang Ox (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) is a remarkable discovery.

Vu Quang is an almost forgotten area, a tiny strip which runs along the border between the old North Vietnam and Laos. It has only been inhabited for about sixty years. The first inhabitants were Vietnamese refugees running away from the French who, although the area was nominally a French colony, never colonised or even explored the place. The Americans didn't bother to bomb it and didn't even spray the ancient trees with napalm or Agent Orange, and perhaps therefore it is not that surprising that this ancient and remote area still harbours some secret residents.

The first thing that anyone in the west heard about the animal which is known to the Vietnamese natives as 'son duong' or 'mountain goat', was in the summer and autumn of 1992 when Dr John MacKinnon, the Senior Conservation Officer of the WWF was pictured in Time Magazine and in The WWF News brandishing two impressive pairs of bovine horns at a press conference to announce that a recent expedition that he had lead to Vu Quang had discovered a new species of fish, a new species of box turtle, a new subspecies of sunbird, and most excitingly evidence of what they believed was going to turn out to be a new species of mammal. At this stage no one was sure what this creature would turn out to be. The expedition had not actually seen one but had obtained their specimens from the local hunters who, as is always the way, were perfectly familiar with the beast.

A year later Dr MacKinnon and a Vietnamese scientist with the marvellous name of Vu Van Dung obtained the first complete carcass and, as BBC Wildlife announced in July 1993 the "mystery Vietnamese horns gained head and legs", and so the taxonomy of this surprisingly large cryptid was at last no longer a matter for speculation.

The story was still not over however because at that time no one had managed to photograph or capture one. In July this year, however a young female looking distressingly cute and Disneyesque was captured and photographed. I believe, but have no references that soon after a young male was also captured and that the two animals were moved to a place of safety where their keepers hope that they will breed as prolifically as other bovids, but this, for the moment at least remains to be seen.

HELP

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF CRYPTOZOOLOGY...

Much to his great glee, (and to the chagrin of all the other bibliophiles in the Crypto world who have heard about it), Dr Karl Shuker recently managed to buy a copy of the sheet music for the semi legendary "Ogopogo: The funny Foxtrot" as featured in practically every book ever written about lake monsters. Interestingly enough it proves that the snatch of lyric quoted in most of these books about the legendary beast having 'a little bitty tail', is completely wrong and the lyric actually says 'I want to put a little bit of salt on his tail'. This provoked a question from both Dr S and the Editor, about other pieces of cryptozoological music. There's 'Puff the Magic Dragon' of course. Karl vaguely remembers a B side of a single on 'Manticore Records' (seems appropriate) called 'Bigfoot' and the Editor has similarly vague memories of a Canadian heavy rock band called 'Sasquatch', and of course there was a folk group called 'The Yetties' but does anyone know any more? It is reasonably well known that the Father of Cryptozoology himself was once a Jazz musician, and the legendary 'Doc' Shiels has been known both to sing and tinkle the ivories from time to time. I will ignore Karl's wonderfully bizarre suggestion that we team them up to record a selection of songs about unknown creatures under the name 'The Crypto Concerto', and will move on to the next subject only pausing to answer one last musical query from Tim from Brighton who asked about the name of the magazine. The answer, sir, is track four side two of an LP called 'Dirk wears White Sox' by 'Adam and the Ants', and previous to that an art exhibition in about 1930 by (I think) an Italian Futurist Painter.

CRABS, WARTHOGS AND MAMMOTHS!

Sally Parsons who has cropped up more than once this issue, is after bits of warthog or thylacine for her own collection but also wants to get in touch with anyone who has kept any species of land or freshwater hermit crab as a pet apart from *Coenabita clypeatus*. She is also interested in recent research about the possible survival of mammoth species in what used to be Soviet Central Asia.

MY SISTER IN LAW AND OTHER ANIMALS

My sister in law, Sian who has the dreadfully antisocial fixation with livestock which has infected most of my family wants any information on a very small armadillo, probably called 'The Fairy Armadillo'. She has searched everywhere for information and this is the last court of appeal!

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY

We are still looking for exhibits for our museum. This summer we have narrowly missed being able to buy the pub sign from the legendary 'Black Dog' at Uplyme from Palmer's Brewery, and several other items of interest have eluded us, although our collection of cuttings, books and general odds and sods has got bigger and bigger. Please keep on sending them in. If you want to be a regional representative please contact us. We have a fact sheet for people who are interested. We are always interested in purchasing live specimens of the larger aquatic turtles and salamanders as well as any books, cuttings, video or museum material on the wildlife of Hong Kong. If you have any of 'Doc' Shiels's other books apart from 'Monstrum' please let us know (even Doc doesn't have some of them).. Generally, to misquote the words at the base of the Statue of Liberty. Send us your clippings.. send us your tat and we shall make great use of it.

BOOK REVIEWS

DEAREST PET: On Bestiality by Midas Dekkers (Verso)

This is one of those unfortunate pieces of work when a (presumably) well known author attempts to use asalacious or shocking format in order to sell a relatively innocuous book dealing with a far less outrageous subject. In this case the real subject-the breakdown of barriers between man and beast, which covers such undoubtedly fortean subjects as feral children, Kaspar Hauser syndrome and circus 'freaks' is dressed up as socially aware pornography in order to line the pockets of a rather dull dutchman who peers out from the back of the dustjacket like a chimeric cross between a vacuum cleaner salesman and a Butlins Redcoat. The book is too revolting to be erotic, too analytical to be pornographic, too lighthearted to be studious and too dull to be entertaining. It is very difficult to see what the point is. All the way through one is expecting a punchline of some sort but it never arrives. The print quality is mediocre and the design, whilst mildly pleasant is extremely unimaginative. I would sincerely encourage everyone to leave this rather nasty publication well alone. If you must buy it wait six months because it will be remaindered everywhere for about 99p, which is really all that it is worth.

YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT by Mark Sloan, Roger Manley and Michelle Van Parys (Virgin)

This is a well compiled collection of photographs from the collection of Robert Ripley, the quasi fortean (with a small F) whose syndicated newspaper column 'Believe it or Not', not only set many an earnest young fortean on his way but also spawned a minor industry. Unfortunately from the point of view of this magazine there is very little of relevance inside it and although photographs of contortionists, strongmen and young women with ridiculous tattoos are very entertaining, I am very glad that I didn't actually pay for my copy.

PERIODICALS

We welcome an exchange of periodicals with magazines of mutual interest

BIGFOOT RECORD, Bill Green, c/o The Bigfoot Centre, 21 Benham St, Apartment F, Bristol, CT06010 USA This free news service for bigfoot buffs is bi-monthly and has a refreshingly informal style

DRAGON CHRONICLE, The dragon trust, PO Box 3369, London SW6 6JN. A fascinating collection of all things draconian which appears three times a year

NEXUS 55 Queens Rd, E Grinstead, W Sussex RH19 1BG Intelligent look at the fringes of science. Well put together.

NESSLETTER Rip Hepple, 7 Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland Co Durham DL13 1RQ. Rip Hepple is a genuine original. This magazine has been appearing regularly for many years and cannot be recommended highly enough.

CREATURE RESEARCH JOURNAL, Paul Johnson, 721 Old Greensberg Pike, N Vernailles, PA15137 USA. An intelligent look at the interface between Cryptozoology and UFO research.

TRACK RECORD, Bigfoot Research Project, PO Box 126, Mt Hood, Oregon 97041 USA. Excellent for anyone with even the most passing interest in North American Manimals.

DELVE, Gene Duplantier, 17 Shetland St, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2M 1X5. Intriguing and eccentric collection of forteana and general oddness.

BIPEDIA, Francois de Saare, CERBI, BP65, 06202, NICE, CEDEX 3, FRANCE. A magazinbe about Initial Bipedalism, scholarly and concise.

TEMS NEWS, 115 Hollybush Lanc, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY. An engaging collection of quasi fortean odds and ends from veteran UFO buff Lionel Beer, who also runs Spacelink books and is compiling a Crypto booklist.

TOUCHSTONE and PEGASUS, Jimmy Goddard, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Surrey two neat UFO/Forteana mags. Well produced and collated.

THE CRYPTO CHRONICLE, 50Green Lane, Worcester. General Crypto Mag with a bigfoot bias.

ANIMALS, Freepost Sidcup, Kent. The magazine of the British Zoos Supporters Club. Highly reccomended.

FROM OUR FILES

This issue we take a trawl through the files of the Western Bigfoot Society for some recent BHM sightings.

1. Raynold Furrell was hiking in late August 1994 in the Mt Washington wilderness area in Oregon. He parked on Hy242 near the Dee Wright Observatory in McKenzie Pass andhiked north on the Cascade Crest Trail about 20 miles (T14SR8E), and was off the lightly forested trail when he and his companions noticed a particularly foul smell. He said it might have been a bear but wasn't sure and called the WBS. A wildlife expert says bears are known to roll in offal the same as a dog will roll on something dead to cover its scent.

2. On 19.9.94 Tex Occanaa was camped at Hilsome-Sanyo camp near Baldwin Mountain NE of San Bernadino Ca when a Bigfoot was sighted between 20.30 and 21.00 hours. The creature was glimpsed in the camp ground lights and ran away in a loping fashion after seeing Tex. The 7 foot creature turned and grinned/grimaced at Tex displaying fangs. It had long arms proportional to its body, brown shaggy hair and a bad smell putrid or sulphurous. There was howling in the woods. Tex notified a park ranger.

3. An unnamed naturalist/geologist was hiking at 10.30 AMbetween Polallie Camp and Surveyors Ridge east of Mt Hood, Oregon, The trail was dusty.and a light rain overnight had settled and smoothed the dust. Animal and game tracks were common and there were no other human tracks. He studied them and came across a single barefoot human print in the trail as if it had crossed near a big tree. Later he heard noises of something large in the undergrowth and felt he was being watched. On his way back he noticed a heavy sweet sour odour. The print was 14" x 5.5", the big toe was 2.5" long.

